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RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 002181

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/13/2019

TAGS: [CASC](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER ZEBARI ON 3 AMCITS IN
IRANIAN CUSTODY

REF: BAGHDAD 2065 AND 2067

Classified By: DCM Robert Ford, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari confirmed to DCM August 12 that he had raised the situation of the three American citizens detained in Iran with Iranian Ambassador Qomi on August 8. Zebari said he had told Qomi that the three should be released immediately. According to Zebari, Qomi returned to him on August 10 with a response from Teheran. Zebari reported that Qomi told him that Iran was indeed holding the Americans. Qomi also stated that the three Americans would not/not be charged with espionage. However, Qomi also told Zebari that he had received no indication from Teheran that the three Americans would be released.

¶2. (C) Zebari speculated that the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps had custody of the three Americans. He also opined that gaining control of the three Americans was a quote gift unquote for Iran. Zebari speculated that Iran would use the Americans as leverage in future bargaining with the Americans. He could not identify what the Iranians might want, however.

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